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Office of Information, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture.

TO MAKE 1916 COUNT OF BIRDS.

Biological Survey Calls for Volunteers, Especially in the West, To Count Birds on Farms and Woodland Tracts.

Washington, D. C.

The third annual bird count of the United States will be made by the Bureau of Biological Survey of the U. S. Department of Agriculture during the breeding season in May and June. In making this survey the Bureau will rely largely on persons interested in bird life who agree to act as volunteer enumerators and count the different kinds of birds found in a 40 or 80 acre farm or woodland tract near their homes. The counts thus made by unpaid observers during the last two summers have furnished to the Department valuable data on the character, number, and distribution of the bird population.

This year the ornithologists of the Department wish particularly to secure a large number of volunteers in the West to report on the bird life in the plains, the semiarid regions, the deserts, and the mountains in that part of the United States. Especial attention also is to be given to securing data as to the birds in the fruit districts of the Pacific coast and in the South Atlantic and Gulf States.

The information collected this year it is believed will be of special value in enabling the Department to test the effect of State and National bird laws and also in determining what relationship exists between bird life and the prevalence of locusts, grasshoppers, and other insect pests in different localities.

As it is impossible to make an actual count of all the birds in any extended district, each enumerator is asked to report only upon the number of birds breeding in a selected area of 40 to 80 acres in country or suburban districts. From the figures thus obtained, those in charge of the work are able to approximate the total number of birds of each kind in different sections of the country.

Enumerators who wish to report on birds on farms are asked to choose an area which includes farm buildings, shade trees, orchards, plowed land, pasture or meadow or swamp, but not very much woodland. The enumerator begins his survey at daylight some

morning and zigzags back and forth in the selected area, counting the male birds. Early in the morning during the last of May or the first week of June every male bird should be in full song and therefore easily counted. The count of one day is to be verified by observation on several mornings.

The height of the breeding season should be chosen for this work. In the latitude of Washington May 30 is about the proper date for the count. In the latitude of Boston the work should begin a week later, and south of Washington even an earlier date should be selected.

In addition to reports on farms and suburbs, enumerators who can do so will^{be}/asked to report on the birds in a timber area of about 40 acres or in an isolated bit of woodland of from 10 to 20 acres. In the Northeastern States, separate reports on the number of birds found in the wilder portions of the farms, preferably those surveyed in the earlier counts, are desired.

Those wishing to take part in the survey can obtain complete instructions by writing to the Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. The work, however, calls for considerable knowledge of birds, and only those who can readily distinguish the different kinds should undertake to make returns for their localities.